

**MINUTES OF THE
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS INTERIM COMMITTEE**
Wednesday, May 21, 2008 – 2:00 p.m. – Room C450 State Capitol

Members Present:

Sen. Peter C. Knudson, Senate Chair
Rep. Douglas C. Aagard, House Chair
Sen. Brent H. Goodfellow
Rep. Ron Bigelow
Rep. DeMar Bud Bowman
Rep. Glenn A. Donnelson
Rep. Lorie D. Fowlke
Rep. Keith Grover
Rep. Neil A. Hansen
Rep. Neal B. Hendrickson
Rep. Eric K. Hutchings
Rep. John G. Mathis
Rep. Curtis Oda
Rep. Larry B. Wiley

Members Absent:

Pres. John L. Valentine
Sen. Gregory S. Bell

Staff Present:

Mr. Benjamin N. Christensen, Policy Analyst
Mr. Eric N. Weeks, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Chelsea Barrett, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Committee Business

Chair Aagard called the meeting to order at 2:13 p.m.

MOTION: Rep. Donnelson moved to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2008 meeting. The motion passed unanimously with Rep. Grover absent for the vote.

Chair Aagard encouraged the Committee to familiarize themselves with "Open and Public Meetings Act," a document distributed to Committee members and discussed at earlier interim committee meetings.

2. Statistical Report - Department of Human Resource Management

Mr. Jeff Herring and Ms. Debbie Price, Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM), distributed "State of Utah, Workforce Profile Report." During the October 17, 2007 meeting, representatives of the DHRM gave a report on total state employee compensation based on the results of their annual compensation surveys. Mr. Herring and Ms. Price answered follow-up questions from the Committee and gave a report addressing employee turnover, salary levels, and the need for more flexible tools to address employee compensation.

Mr. Herring and Ms. Price answered questions from the Committee.

3. Utah State Personnel Management Act Revisions

Ms. Price distributed "Years of Service at Termination," "Turnover Trends in Georgia State Government," and "Turnover Rates - Fiscal Year 2007." She presented "Workforce Planning, A Compensation Analysis," a presentation including information on workforce planning. Ms. Price commented on the new goal to attract workers who are competitive in the job market. She discussed the

potential revision of the State of Utah Personnel Management Act; including, an updated system to address modern personnel practices.

Chair Aagard asked the Committee for questions on the presentation.

Rep. Wiley requested more information regarding the midpoint scores for Utah employment statistics compared to other state governments' human resource statistics.

Rep. Bigelow asked about the suggested time line for these proposed changes and cautioned against rushing the changes through the process. Ms. Price noted that this is a large project. Currently, DHRM is breaking the project down into incremental goals.

4. Ballot Coordination Between Local District and Municipal Elections

Chair Aagard invited Sen. Goodfellow to share his experience with local district and municipal elections. Sen. Goodfellow commented that elections should include one ballot with multiple ballot topics for voter convenience.

Mr. Christensen presented "Legal Voter Ballot," a presentation distributed to the Committee prior to the meeting. Mr. Christensen explained that placing local district races on the same ballot as other elections has been explored in recent years for voter convenience. He suggested that three questions be considered: (1) As a policy choice, should the Committee work towards one ballot for voter convenience? (2) Can we overcome the technological and administrative barriers? and (3) What are the costs and cost allocations involved?

Mr. Weeks continued the presentation and discussed information included under Utah Code Section 17B-1-306. He explained that the Utah Code requires an election for local district board members to be held at the same time as the municipal general election and at polling places designated by the county clerk. The clerk is required to coordinate the placement of local district offices in the nonpartisan section of the municipal general election ballot unless it is not feasible. Exceptions apply for irrigation, electric, and gas improvement districts.

Chair Aagard introduced Mr. Burt Granberg, a representative from Utah Automated Geographic Reference Center (AGRC). Mr. Granberg explained current geographic data involving Davis County and the Cities and Special District Boundaries. He explained the many complexities with election boundaries and demonstrated that the AGRC website can help retrieve information for this purpose using photographic database imaging. Mr. Granberg explained that this technology can be used to find districts and precincts for an address and location.

Ms. Pat Beckstead, Davis County, Elections Office, discussed her experience with a state-wide database and precinct boundaries. Ms. Beckstead noted Davis County's experience with assigning Property ID numbers to the voter records database. She explained that the project lasted approximately 18 months and was expensive. She further noted the large obstacle of poll worker confusion when considering the idea of changing election methods.

Chair Aagard invited the public to speak on the issue.

Mr. Julio Garcia, Election Director, Salt Lake County, explained that putting special districts on a municipal ballot is a noble idea in theory; however, Mr. Garcia explained that given the tools and resources available today this would be a challenging task. He recommended to the Committee the following alternative options: (1) to provide more mail ballots for special district elections and (2) to have the Legislature invest in electronic poll books.

Rep. Bigelow requested the various county clerks work with staff to gather additional information and suggestions for the Committee on this issue.

Mr. Terel Grimley, General Manager, Weber and Box Elder County Irrigation Districts, noted the special circumstances for irrigation districts in elections. Mr. Grimley explained that the unconventional boundary lines for water districts are based on water acreage per owner.

Mr. Scott Hogenson, Chief Deputy Clerk, Salt Lake County, noted his interest in creating a proposal for the Committee on this issue. He commented on the multi-faceted aspects of undertaking this type of project.

Mr. Mark Anderson, General Counsel, Utah Association of Special Districts, spoke in favor of any effort to raise voter participation. He expressed concern for the financial aspects of the idea discussed.

Ms. Kathy Dopp, Utah Count Votes, distributed "Davis County E-Pollbook Problems," and expressed her concerns with electronic voting methods.

5. Election Law Changes

The Committee did not discuss this item.

6. Other Items / Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Wiley moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously with Chair Knudson, Sen. Goodfellow, Rep. Donnelson, Rep. Bigelow, Rep. Bowman, Rep. Fowlke, Rep. Grover, Rep. Hansen, Rep. Hutchings, Rep. Mathis, and Rep. Oda absent for the vote.

Chair Aagard adjourned the meeting at 4:41 p.m.